Ma

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Ma

by Hollow279

Summary

She hunts for the little feet that once pattered on the wooden floors.
She finds the man he became.
She stays for the Witcher who, despite everything, still loves his Ma.

Notes

You're telling me there wasn't a single mother who fought for her son? There are stories of women lifting cars off of their infants, and yet you tell me there is not a single woman who looked into the eyes of a Witcher and still saw her child? Not even one?

See the end of the work for more notes

A Mother

There is a Woman at the gates. Her raven-dark hair greying at the roots and wrinkles at the corners of eyes, but there is a wildfire in her eyes and a determined fury etched into her bones

There is a Mother at the gates. Her son ripped from her embrace a decade ago when her bastard lover stole her baby, the light in her eyes, and disappeared.

There is a Hunter at the gates. A decade of relentless searching, a stubborn belief and a mother intuition that her baby is alive. Whispered rumors and curses spat of a man with raven-dark hair and the cursed yellow eyes of a cat, a likely dead-end, but what else does she have? Years of tracking, begging, and hunting down the location of the fabled secret Witcher keep.

There is a Tracker at the gates. Stalking through the haunting cold of the Witcher's home, delving through dark halls till she reaches a great hall, the residents of the keep gathered around a food laden table.

There is a Mother. Dozens of yellow slitted eyes snap to the door, nostrils flaring as enhanced senses take in her scent. The scent of a human mother, of fury and determination and grief.

There is a Man. He rises from his seat at the bench, his eyes yellow and haunting as all the others beside him.

There is a Witcher. His fellows tense, but remain still as he vaults the table and draws close to her. She knows this man, she knows his raven-dark hair, the angles of his face, and the shape of his eyes. And though she has never heard it before, she knows the hoarse croak of his voice "...Ma?"

There is a Mother. Tears gather as she holds out her arms to this man, heavily muscled and tall. The color of his eyes is foreign to her, but she would rather the golden-amber of a Witcher than the rich brown of the Lover who gave away her son, of the Lover who she has personally gutted with a rusty breadknife when she had learned of his betrayal.

There is a Witcher. Whose face twists in old grief as he steps into her embrace, relishing in the tight, almost painful squeeze of his mothers arms. Her hands run through his hair as he drops his head to her shoulder, his own arms raising to embrace her in turn.

There is a Mother. Who whispers to her baby, who has grown to man in the years beyond her reach "My Son. I found you"

A Witcher

She looks at these men. These fierce, lethally competent men. She sees the echoes of past hurts. She sees the anger, the resignation, the distrust, the echoes of longing now long past. She sees these men and their hurt, and she knows that these scarred and bloodied warriors were once someone's baby. She does not pretend that all mothers love their sons. Not all mothers deserve the gift of little hands in theirs and trusting eyes looking to them for comfort, but she knows that all sons love their mothers.

So she stays.

Not just for her son, though that is why she came to the dark keep. Not just for her son, who even now reaches for her every cold winter morning with relief in his eyes, as if she had only been a dream of the previous night. Not just for her son, who sits next to her every meal, hissing and swatting at his brothers-in-arms to ensure her plate is always filled with her favorites and tankard kept full. Not just for her son, who lays his head on her lap as she reads by the fire, taking comfort in a presence years deprived.

She stays for the men who were once boys taken from their mothers, or given away by women who never should have been. She stays for the men who have been cheated, reviled, and spat upon by the hateful fools who see them as only monsters in human skin, too distracted by their monstrous eyes to see the men behind them. She stays because all boys, no matter how old, still love their mothers.

She stays for Lambert, who sneered and glared and spat words of hatred when she first arrived. She stays for Lambert who slowly came to trust her, like a feral cat slowly comes to trust that the patient hand will not strike it, no matter how it yowls and bites. She stays for Lambert, who presses tonics in her hands for her headaches and balms for her joints with rough words and a hurried retreat, his ears burned red.

She stays for Eskel, who kept his quiet distance, his face turned away. She stays for Eskel, who she bribed scar-warped smiles from with sweets only a mother can bake. She stays for Eskel, his sword-calloused hands gentle as he tends to Lil' Bleater, sharing the quiet mornings as she feeds the ash-white goat from her palm. She stays for Eskel, his teasing heckles coaxing amused smiles as they watch the Witchers train.

She stays for Geralt, whose golden eyes watch her with something akin to curiosity and echoing of failed expectations. She stays for Geralt, who has only ever wanted what to do was right and is disappointed but unsurprised when the world does not follow. She stays for Geralt, who wanted to be a Knight but was instead called Monster. She stays for Geralt, who helps her as she repairs the decrepit halls of Kaer Morhen. She stays for Geralt, his innate kindness returned within the shelter of Kaer Morhen

She stays for Vesemir, who is the most like and unlike her in the cold keep. She stays for Vesemir, who has held countless little hands in his palms, but buried far more six feet under. She stays for Vesemir, who remembers them all. She stays for Vesemir, whose age shows not

in his hair alone as his young students leave for the lethal path. She stays for Vesemir, who will wait with her for the return of their boys to Kaer Morhen in the Winter months.

She stays in Kaer Morhen, where her hunt is over. Where she must let her son go, to do his sworn duty and hunt the monsters that plague the people. She stays in Kaer Morhen, where she knows her son will always return to her.

She stays.

A Son

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

He was just little when his Father gave him to the Witcher, now long since lost to the path. He was little, but he remembers how he kicked and screamed for his Ma. He remembers how he cried when the Witcher set him atop the large horse and walked them away. He remembers his arrival at Kaer Morhen, how the halls were dark and walls cold. He remembers the training, the strike of the flat of an iron blade against his tender skin, the crack of his bones as he fell on the obstacle course, the ringing of his ears as the trainers berated him for his tears.

He remembers crying in the halls, his arms hugging his knees as he tried to squash the tears his teacher told him he should not feel. He remembers hearing the soft thud of a larger body sit beside him, of looking up from his arms and seeing Vesemir. Vesemir, who said nothing and did not look at him, but placed a strong hand upon his head. He remembers whispering in the quiet of the evening, he remembers asking for his Ma, asking to go home. He remembers how Vesemir said nothing, but how the older man's eyes closed and how he sighed, laced with something like understanding.

He remembers the trials, the grasses. He remembers how his blood boiled within his veins, how it seemed his very skin was trying to rip away from his flesh, how his eyes burned. He remembers how he cried, how he wailed and screamed until his voice broke and he could scream no more. He remembers wishing for his Ma, for her labor-calloused hands and gentle eyes, not the golden ones that watched on dispassionately as he writhed in pain. As he screamed and screamed, he wished for his mother's strong arms to hold him, he wished to bury his face in her long hair.

He wished.

He remembers those years on the Path. He remembers how mothers would hide their children at the sight of him. How aldermen would cheat him out of his bloodily-won coin. How healers would refuse to treat him and how he was forced to learn how to stitch his own skin together. He remembers looking for his Ma, but not knowing the way.

He has forgotten the woods where he once played, his Ma pretending to be a Fae queen for him to bravely rescue like the knights of story. He has forgotten the village where he was born, where the old women would sneakily press treats into his hands and wink.

He has forgotten the way Home.

Where is home now? Is it with his Ma, who loved him so much the stars would seem dim compared to the light in her eyes? With his Ma, where there was always warm bread upon the hearth and honey on the table? With his Ma, who would always blow kisses upon his skinned knees? With his Ma, who would always lift the thick covers to allow him to crawl into her bed and cuddle with her after a nightmare?

Is home Kaer Morhen? Is it with the boys he was raised to adulthood alongside? The men he considered brothers in all but blood? Was it with Lambert, his crudeness, biting tongue, and laughter? Was it with Eskel, his sharp wit and fondly rolled eyes? Was it with Geralt, and the kind of exasperation that can only be evoked from a fond older brother? Was it Vesemir, who was the closest thing he has to a Father? Was it in these once hated halls he has come to associate with safety from the very people he has sworn to defend?

He lays his head on his mother's lap, his eyes closed as he listens to her breath and the quiet turning of pages as she reads. He remembers the moment she stormed into the great hall, her raven-dark hair greying at the roots but as wild as he once recalled. He remembers how he stood from his spot at dinner, his brothers confused and wary towards the brazen woman who walked into a Witcher's keep like she owned the place. He remembers how his eyes met hers, her eyes as green as they were in his childhood. He remembers how he dreaded the moment fear and disgust would fill her eyes as she stared at his yellow ones, he remembers how they never did.

He remembers how he vaulted the table, hushed swearing from the others as they got out of his way. He remembers the cascade of conflicting emotions as his Ma held out her arms to him and he near collapsed into her embrace. How her arms were thinner than he had remembered, but still just as strong. How the laugh and scowl lines in her face had deepened, but still in the same places. He remembered how she stroked his hair and whispered that she had found him, how she loved him, how cat-eyes or no, he was hers.

He remembers how he couldn't figure out how he felt. How loss, grief, longing, relief, anger, hope, sadness, and utter joy were all bundled together in a knot in his chest as he hugged his Ma.

He remembers the early days after her arrival, where he pulled aside his brothers one by one and hissed vicious threats at them, that if they messed this up for him, that if they chased away his Ma...

He remembers how his brothers in turn would try to carefully, gently, warn him. How humans feared Witchers. How Witcher's never got the happy ending humans did, not when it came to family. How he should be careful, because while his Ma may seem happy now, she would come to learn that he wasn't the same boy that had been taken from her.

He remembers how his Ma proved them wrong. How over time they were drawn in like moths to a candlelight. How her easy acceptance of them earned her theirs in kind. How many of his brothers-in-arms had come to teasingly call her Ma and how a few of them had come to mean it.

He remembers.

Chapter End Notes

Alrighty! This is all I got.

Keep in mind, I wrote this in an afternoon, did some editing, then got too nervous to keep it in my drafts so I rush posted it.

End Notes

Judge away! I WILL cry. I can't write traditional style for the LIFE of me.

Did I want a fic like this? Yes. Is there a fic like this? Not that I know of. Can I write a fic like this? FUCK NO I'm not that talented. Did I try anyways? Yes, cause why not?

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